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## **Sen. Van Woerkom's bills to improve child-support collection signed into law**

**LANSING** – Legislation to improve the collection of child support has been signed into law, announced Sen. Gerald Van Woerkom, R-Norton Shores.

Senate Bill 1319, now Public Act 549, requires Michigan to disburse child support payments electronically either by direct deposit or, for those who do not have a bank account, through a debit card system administered by the state.

“For parents, lost checks in the mail and lengthy delays in getting their child support can cause terrible hardship,” said Van Woerkom, sponsor of the bill. “Direct deposit of child-support payments will help get the money to these families more quickly and cut down on administrative and mailing costs.”

Van Woerkom also sponsored SB 1450, now P.A. 481, which requires the administrator of an estate to notify the Friend of the Court of any individuals who may be entitled to money from the estate. If a recipient of the estate has not paid their child support, a lien can be placed on their portion of the estate to collect past arrearages. SB 1450 is part of a package of bills aimed at helping in the collection of unpaid child support.

“Unfortunately, Michigan’s high rate of unpaid child support makes this type of legislation necessary to ensure the children of our state are receiving the financial support they are entitled to,” Van Woerkom said.

Other legislation sponsored by Van Woerkom was signed into law at the end of 2004, including SB 793, now P.A. 453, to establish where an identity-theft crime can be prosecuted; and SB 1171, now P.A. 494, to define abandoned vehicles as litter and establish penalties for violations.

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